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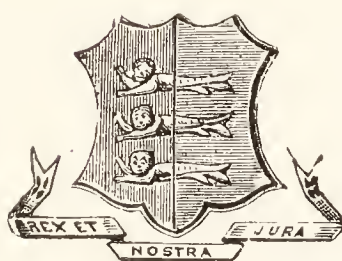
THE GREAT YARMOUTH
EDUCATION AUTHORITY.



THE
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL MEDICAL OFFICER
FOR 1915.

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*To the Members of the Education Authority of
Great Yarmouth.*

TOWN HALL,

GREAT YARMOUTH,

August, 1916.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

In submitting my eighth Annual Report on the work of School Medical Inspection it is necessary to draw attention to its unusual form and brevity. Upon the resignation of your Assistant Medical Officer I agreed to take over his work (thus setting free his potential successor for Army service) and to carry it on in all its essentials. I believe I may fairly claim to have done this, but I have been unable to afford the time for the laborious statistical details which we have been accustomed to present to you. Further, I was unable to devote time to this report (or to the Health Report) until the advent of the summer school holidays. Fortunately, the Board of Education has issued a circular letter recognising the difficulty of making out the usual reports, and requires only "short reports of a comparatively simple nature, indicating the character and volume of the work done and the results of following-up and treatment."

The usual number and classes of children were inspected during the year 1915 at the routine examinations, viz.:—Entrants (all children admitted to school for the first time), 8-year-olds and Leavers (all children over 12 years of age who had not previously been inspected at that age.

The following table gives a classified list:—

TABLE I. A.

AGE.		BOYS.	GIRLS.	TOTAL.
Entrants	{ 4 years	186	140	326
	{ 5 "	312	304	616
	{ 6 "	89	105	194
	{ Other ages	14	17	31
Intermediate Group				
Leavers	{ 8 years	468	456	924
	{ 12 years	300	347	647
	{ 13 "	153	128	281
	{ 14 "	5	4	9
		1527	1501	3028
		Entrants.	8 years.	Leavers.
Boys		601	468	458
Girls		566	456	479
		1167	924	937

In addition to the foregoing "code" groups, "special cases" and "re-examinations" were as follows:—

TABLE I. B.

		<i>Special cases.</i>	<i>No. of children re-examined.</i>
Boys	...	469	203
Girls	...	455	196
		<u>924</u>	<u>399</u>

DEFECTS FOUND ON MEDICAL INSPECTION.

These, in general, in no way differed from previous years, being chiefly defective vision, carious teeth, naso-pharyngeal obstruction, discharging ears and deafness.

On the whole the children may be said to be sufficiently clothed, markedly deficient clothing being very rare. I have noticed a great difference in the proportion of children wearing woollen vests since 1908. When inspection was commenced in that year they were comparatively rare; now they are in the majority. Boots, on the other hand, are too often non-weatherproof.

Contagious diseases are rarely found now at school inspection, such cases being sent to the Clinic as they occur.

True heart disease is rare, but a number of children are found with transient apical systolic murmurs. Observation of these children goes to show that whatever may be the cause, the defect has seldom any recognisable effect on the child's health.

Defective vision is, next to carious teeth, the commonest defect. It is interesting to note that many children who at 8 years of age have bad sight, have normal, or nearly normal, vision when examined again at 12 years. I do not think this is any reason for neglecting to treat the defect; it cannot be foretold that the sight will improve without treatment, and very many of these children have still less vision remaining on re-examination.

Carious teeth are present in 85 to 90% of cases. This disease is in fact so common that few parents take the slightest interest in it, except at such times as the child has toothache.

The glands of the neck are usually palpable in the younger children. In itself this condition is seldom severe enough to need treatment, but as an indication of the amount of toxic absorption from carious teeth, enlarged tonsils and sore heads, it points very definitely towards the necessity of dealing with those complaints.

Active tuberculosis is seldom recognisable in the children presenting themselves at the routine examination. Known cases are kept under observation at the Saturday morning clinic.

FOLLOWING-UP.

Cases found to require treatment are kept under observation in two ways (a) by visits of the school nurses to the homes and (b) by re-examination by myself in school.

(a) The nurses paid a total of 660 visits in this connection in relation to the following children:—

TABLE IV.

DEFECT.	NUMBER OF DEFECTS.			No Report available.	Number treated.	Number not treated.	Percentage treated.
	From previous year.	New.	Total.				
Nose & Throat	4	25	29	9	3	17	15
External eye disease	—	2	2	1	—	1	—
Ear disease ...	15	42	57	10	9	38	19
Teeth ...	30	5	35	—	8	27	23
Lungs ...	—	3	3	—	—	3	—
Vision and Squint	38	137	175	27	44	104	29
Miscellaneous	3	13	16	—	9	7	56
	90	227	317	47	73	197	27

The percentage treated (27%) is higher than in previous years, but is still very low. The total number of children visited is less than usual for two reasons. (1) I see no object in continuing to send the nurses after cases of carious teeth. There is no evidence that any useful object has been attained by such visits in former years. Few parents have any idea of dental treatment for children beyond taking them to an unqualified dentist to have aching teeth extracted. The benefits of conservative treatment may be urged upon them by the nurse, as they have already been urged by me at the

inspection, but being a matter of which they have no practical experience, the whole thing is taken as merely a matter of academic discussion and will remain in this state until a dental clinic is formed. When a dental clinic has been in operation a few months the results of treatment will become a matter of reality in the parents' minds, not alone amongst those whose children have been treated. (2) Owing to shortage of office staff a batch of children could not be visited at the end of the year.

(b) Re-examinations by myself in the schools is carried out by a card-index system of special cases. All cases visited by the nurses are indexed and many others also. The number of children re-examined is given in Table I. B.

THE SCHOOL CLINIC.

This is purely an inspection clinic, no treatment being given. It is primarily intended for the usual purposes of an inspection clinic, viz., to inspect, and if necessary temporarily exclude from school, children who are suffering from contagious skin diseases or who are on account of a verminous condition unfitted to attend school. To these are added cases of chronic bad attendance claiming illhealth as a reason, and who are not being attended by a doctor.

Unfortunately the clinic is so popular that cases of all sorts tend to gravitate to it, especially cases of acute illness. Apart from the fact that it is manifestly impossible to act as medical attendant to nearly 10,000 children, it is necessary to refuse admission to these cases. It is the commonest thing for children suffering from measles, mumps, chicken-pox, whooping-cough and influenza, to come to the clinic with the message "Mother wants to know if I am to go to school." The danger of such a proceeding does not need elaboration when it is pointed out that children from all the schools of the town meet at the clinic in the mornings. The number of children seen at the clinic in 1915 was 924. They paid an average of 2.5 visits each.. The number on the list on December 31st was 91.

MEDICAL TREATMENT.

A scheme of treatment by the Education Authority was in contemplation for cases requiring dental, eye and skin treatment. On the outbreak of war this was necessarily abandoned.

A great deal is being heard at present of various measures for the betterment of the racial physique, including schemes that commence as far back as the expectant mother. Such measures are good, and will effect improvement in course of time, but no single measure will have such a marked and *immediate* effect as attention to the teeth and vision of school children.

Apart from provision being made by the Education Authority, the facilities for treating school children are not very great. The Hospital cannot attend to all of them, and the majority cannot afford a doctor for such things as eye treatment, conservative dental measures, enlarged tonsils and adenoids, and discharging ears.

CONDENSED STATISTICS FOR 1915.

The following figures from the body of this report show at a glance the amount of work carried out :—

Children systematically examined at School	3028
Children examined at the Inspection Clinic	924
Children re-examined in School	399
	4351
Visits paid by children to the Clinic	2312
Visits paid by School Nurses to homes	660

In conclusion I wish to thank the Head Teachers for their invaluable help, which in many cases has been given at great inconvenience to themselves during a very trying time of staff depletion.

I am, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. N. STEVENS,
School Medical Officer.

